

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1493
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 20718

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRIEFING FOURIE

SUMMARY: IN BRIEFING FOURIE, OWEN MADE A CLEAR AND
FORCEFUL PRESENTATION OF THE STATUS OF THE ANGLO-AMERI-
CAN PROPOSALS FOR RHODESIA AND OF OUR DETERMINATION TO
PRESS AHEAD. HE EXPRESSED HIS STRONG DOUBTS THAT
SMITH'S INTERNAL TALKS COULD ACHIEVE A WORKABLE
SETTLEMENT AND STRESSED THAT ANY PROCESS WHICH SMITH
ATTEMPTED TO IMPLEMENT WOULD FAIL TO BRING STABILITY
BECAUSE IT HAD NO CHANCE OF GAINING INTERNATIONAL
ACCEPTANCE. FOURIE REITERATED SOUTH AFRICA'S DESIRE
FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. HE SAID
HE DOUBTED SMITH WOULD ALLOW THE INTERNAL TALKS TO
FOUNDER ON THE ISSUE OF A BLOCKING THIRD BUT DID NOT
COMMENT WHETHER HE THOUGHT AN EVENTUAL INTERNAL
SETTLEMENT WOULD WORK. HE CRITICIZED THE TRANSITIONAL
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SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS
WHICH, HE SAID, PREVENTED VORSTER'S COMPLETE SUPPORT.

1. DAVID OWEN, WITH LORD CARVER AND JOHNNY GRAHAM,
BRIEFED BRAND FOURIE AND AMBASSADOR BOTHA ON RHODESIA
DECEMBER 21. I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY RAY SEITZ.

2. OWEN BEGAN WITH A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF WHERE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS NOW STAND. HE SAID OUR INITIATIVE HAD SURVIVED THE ROUGH PASSAGE OF THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS - PARTICULARLY KAUNDA'S MISGIVINGS - BUT THERE ARE SIGNS NOW THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS SWINGING BACK TO OUR PROPOSALS HAVING FAILED TO SHIFT US ON TRANSITIONAL ISSUES. SMITH'S TALKS IN SALISBURY HAVE ALSO CREATED PROBLEMS, BUT IT IS ALREADY APPARENT THAT THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS ARE RUNNING INTO TROUBLE WITH SMITH. EVEN IF THE SALISBURY TALKS REACH SOME CONCLUSION, OWEN SAID, WE FAIL TO SEE HOW SUCH A SETTLEMENT CAN WIN INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS CONTINUE TO OFFER THE BEST SOLUTION.

3. FOURIE SAID THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD MAINTAINED REGULAR CONTACT WITH MUZOREWA, SITHOLE, AND MORE RECENTLY, WITH "NKOMO'S PEOPLE." HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SALISBURY TALKS WERE RUNNING INTO DIFFICULTIES BUT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE PARTIES HAD AGREED TO SEVEN OUT OF EIGHT PRINCIPLES. THE EIGHTH - A BLOCKING THIRD - HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED BUT FOURIE EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL CONVICTION THAT SMITH WOULD NOT PERMIT THE DISCUSSIONS TO BREAK DOWN ON THIS POINT.

4. OWEN COMMENTED ON THE APPARENT CURIOSITY THAT
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SMITH IS WEAKENING THE CREDIBILITY OF THE VERY LEADERS HE WISHES TO ESTABLISH. MOREOVER, HE SAID, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW SMITH COULD IMPLEMENT A SETTLEMENT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE. IT IS "NONSENSE" IF ANYONE THINKS THE UK WOULD ENDORSE SOMETHING SO FRAGILE. BRITAIN'S DECISION TO ADMINISTER A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD IN RHODESIA IS PREDICATED ON AN EFFECTIVE CEASE-FIRE WHICH THE SALISBURY TALKS CANNOT HOPE TO ACHIEVE.

5. OWEN SAID THAT AFTER THIS RECENT PERIOD OF ABERRATIONS HE NOW SEES PEOPLE RALLYING BACK TO THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THIS IS TRUE OF KAUNDA AND THE PF, AND OF MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WHO ARE INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT ENTANGLEMENT IN SMITH'S WEB. MACHEL AND NYERERE HAD REMAINED STEADFAST IN SUPPORT OF US, ALTHOUGH RAIDS LIKE CHIMOIO CAN ONLY GIVE THEM PAUSE AND INCREASE SYMPATHY FOR THE PF.

6. OWEN DESCRIBED WHAT HE SAW AS OBJECTIONS TO THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. FIRST, HE SAID, THE POWERS

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OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER MUST BE DECISIVE,
BUT WE ARE PREPARED TO ORGANIZE A CONSULTATIVE
ADVISORY COUNCIL IN ORDER TO BUILD CONFIDENCE.
WE CANNOT, HOWEVER, OPEN THE PANDORA'S BOX OF ANOTHER
GENEVA. SECOND, LAW AND ORDER NATURALLY CAUSES CON-
CERN, BUT WE HAVE THE CONCEPT OF A GOOD PLAN ABOUT
WHICH FOURIE WOULD BE BRIEFED IN THE AFTERNOON.
THIRD, OTHER PROVISIONS FOR THE TRANSITION, PAR-
TICULARLY THE MAINTENANCE OF THE POLICE, HAVE BEEN
CRITICIZED BY THE PF BUT WE CANNOT AGREE TO THE
RIGGING OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND THE UN WILL BE
AN ESSENTIAL MEASURE OF INSURANCE. FOURTH, SOME
CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS ARE CRITICIZED, BUT WE NOW
HAVE AN ELABORATED DRAFT WHICH WE THINK IS FAIR BUT
IS NOT NECESSARILY FINAL.

7. HERE, OWEN AGAIN STRESSED THE UNWORKABILITY
OF A SETTLEMENT DEVELOPED BY SMITH. AFRICA WILL NOT
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ACCEPT ANY RESULT IN WHICH SMITH SUPERVISES THE ELECTION. THE FIGHTING WILL CONTINUE, AS WILL SANCTIONS, AND IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO EXPECT OTHERWISE. THERE IS NO ADVANTAGE TO SOUTH AFRICA IN SUCH A PROSPECT.

8. AT THIS POINT, I STRONGLY ENDORSED OWEN'S PRESENTATION. I EMPHASIZED THAT AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WOULD PERPETUATE A CIVIL WAR AND OPEN THE DOOR TO FURTHER EXTERNAL INTERVENTION. WE NEED THE FRONT LINE STATES NOT ONLY TO STOP THE WAR BUT TO ACT EFFECTIVELY IN THE UNITED NATIONS. TACTICALLY, THE FRONTLINE IS INDISPENSABLE PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF MOUNTING PRESSURE AT THE UN THAT WE TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS AGAINST RHODESIA. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO SHOW PROGRESS. SMITH'S EFFORTS, EVEN IF GENUINE, OMIT ONE SIDE OF THE CONFLICT SO THAT A SALISBURY SETTLEMENT CANNOT BRING STABILITY TO THE REGION.

9. FOURIE ANSWERED THAT SOUTH AFRICA STILL REGARDS AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION AS "THE FIRST PRIZE." IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THEN SOMETHING ELSE IS BETTER THAN NOTHING. HE SAID THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD BEEN "DESPONDENT" TO SEE THAT OUR PROPOSALS SEEM TO DEPEND ON PF ACCEPTANCE. BUT THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK, HE SAID, IS THE PROBLEM OF LAW AND ORDER, AND IT IS THIS ISSUE WHICH PREVENTS PRIME MINISTER VORSTER FROM COMING OUT IN FAVOR OF OUR INITIATIVE. HE ADDED THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE UN FORCE ALSO PRESENTS DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE WHAT INSPIRES TRUST ON ONE SIDE ENGENDERS FEAR ON THE OTHER.

10. FOURIE SAID IT WAS WISE TO LET SMITH'S TALKS "RUN
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THEIR COURSE." THEY SERVE EVENTUALLY TO NARROW THE GAP. HE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT SMITH WON'T LET THE TALKS FAIL OVER THE ISSUE OF THE BLOCKING THIRD BUT HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THE TALKS CANNOT GO ON INDEFINITELY. WHEN OWEN SAID THAT THE FEBRUARY OAU SUMMIT COULD CREATE A NEW POLITICAL SITUATION IN AFRICA, FOURIE SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE URGENCY. OWEN EMPHASIZED THAT RAIDS LIKE CHIMOIO ONLY OPEN THE DOOR FOR CUBAN INTERVENTION. FOURIE DISCLAIMED ANY ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF CHIMOIO.

11. "THE KEY," FOURIE SAID, "IS WHAT COMES OUT OF

YOUR PROPOSALS FOR SECURITY IN THE TRANSITION."
HE SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE BRIEFING BY LORD
CARVER. OWEN SAID THE IDEAS FOR SECURITY ARE SENSIBLE
AND WORKABLE. HE EXPRESSED HIS FEAR THAT WITHOUT
A SETTLEMENT BASED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS,
RHODESIA WOULD TURN INTO A "FUNERAL PYRE." WHILE
WE HAVE BEEN STYMIED IN THE RECENT PAST, WE ARE NOW
READY
TO PUSH FORWARD. FOURIE SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL
FOR THE INFORMATION WHICH HE WOULD USE WHEN HE
SEES VORSTER NEXT WEEK.

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